

EBSA News



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Mental Health Parity Act Extended To December 31, 2003

WASHINGTON—The U. S. Department of Labor’s Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) today announced a technical amendment extending the interim final rules under the Mental Health Parity Act to Dec. 31, 2003.

President Bush signed the Mental Health Reauthorization Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-313) on Dec. 2, 2002, extending the sunset date of the Mental Health Parity Act (MHPA) to Dec. 31, 2003.

The original Act contained a sunset provision requiring that provisions of MHPA would not apply to benefits for services furnished on or after Sept. 30, 2001. An earlier amendment extended the Act until Dec. 31, 2002.

MHPA requires that annual or lifetime dollar limits for mental health benefits be no lower than the dollar limits for medical and surgical benefits offered by a group health plan. The Act applies to group health plans or health insurance coverage offered by issuers in connection with a group health plan that offers both mental health and medical/surgical benefits. However, MHPA does not require plans to offer mental health benefits.

The technical amendment extending the sunset date is scheduled to be published in the April 14, 2003 *Federal Register*. For more information about mental health benefits, contact EBSA at **1-866-444-3272** or visit the website at www.dol.gov/ebsa to obtain a free copy of “Questions and Answers: Recent Changes in Health Care Law.”

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